

THE UPS AND DOWNS

ELEVATOR SAFETY DIVISION NEWSLETTER VOLUME 1, MARCH 1, 2008

THE HAZARDS OF SPRINKLERS IN ELEVATOR MACHINE ROOMS...WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

There is a unique problem that exists when state or local fire codes call for sprinklers to be located in elevator machine rooms.

In the event of a fire in the machine room, an automatic means to disconnect power from the affected machine is used. The automatic means is usually accomplished by a heat detector located in the machine room. NFPA 13 provides other means as well.

The heat detector, upon the application of heat will activate a shunt trip mechanism to remove power to the affected machine. If the shunt trip is located in the machine room disconnect, only the "load side" is de-energized.

Since the disconnect is not required to be a NEMA 3R or better container, the application of water from a sprinkler can come in contact with the disconnect "line side" and in so doing run down the buss and contact the "load side" and energize the circuit, causing the elevator to run. Additional water on the controller circuits could have catastrophic results to persons on the elevator. Not to mention the inherent danger associated with emergency responders and water in contact with 220/440 volt disconnect.

Alabama has from the beginning, taken a better approach to the problem of sprinklers in the machine rooms; that is to require the shunt trip to be located (activated) outside the machine room, triggered by the heat detector located in the machine room. This will de-energize the line side as well as load side of the disconnecting means, thereby eliminating the possibility of water energizing the affected machine by a sprinkler activation within the machine room. Other states such as Georgia, Tennessee, California, and various companies, have had this approach for some years now. Its all in the name of safety.

CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS (CEU)

It's getting time to renew licenses for well over half the mechanics licensed in Alabama.

The renewal of all licenses is conditioned upon the submission of a certificate of completion of a course designed to ensure the continuing education of licensees on new and existing provisions of the regulations of the board. The course shall consist of not less than eight hours of instruction and shall be attended and completed within one year immediately preceding any such license renewal.

The course is taught by instructors through continuing education providers and may include, but not be limited to, association seminars and labor training programs. The board shall approve the continuing education providers. Remember, this office does not schedule any classes or provide any training courses. We can provide you with information on those who do.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Hazards Associated With Sprinklers in the machine Room.*
- *Continued Education*
- *Letter From a Reader*
- *Elevator Safety Review Board Composition*



Factoid...

It is always with a great sense of pride that I read and enjoy "Elevator World" magazine.

Knowing that this world wide publication is owned and operated in Alabama (Mobile) should make all Alabamians proud.

The magazine contains good and timely information such as...

...A recent study showed that almost 30,000 children were injured in elevator accidents in the U.S. between 1990 and 2004.

Elevator World..

LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

Dear Readers,



We are always pleased to hear from our licensees concerning this newsletter. Those we receive include feedback concerning the direction the program is heading, important questions, and genuine concerns.

Recently I received a letter that expressed all the above. The writer thanked us for our responsiveness to issues he had brought to our attention.

He went on to say that he was having a problem getting the owners of conveyances to post their certificates promptly; that some building owners are telling him that the inspector informed them that they only need to have a certificate on file. Perhaps the information below can help you inform the owner of the requirements.

Section 25-13-18 of the elevator code states:

(c) A certificate of operation is renewable annually except for certificates issued for platform and stairway chairlifts for private residences, which shall be valid for a period of three years. Certificates of operation must be clearly displayed on or in each conveyance.

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We also went one step further and put this requirement on the actual certificate of operation. We find that most owners will listen to the service technician or the inspector when they convey this information. More often than not, we find it is just a miscommunication.

The writer goes on to say the owner will not always show him the inspection report when asked to do so. That is up to the owner to present the report or not. You can ask to see the violation notification letter we send, which lists all the violations from the report.

To better illustrate, I would like to describe the procedure that ultimately will produce a certificate of operation.

The inspector, at the request of the owner, performs the annual inspection. A copy of the inspection report is left with the owner after the inspector conducts an exit interview detailing the violations, billing instructions etc.

After an inspection, the inspector has, by law, 30 days to submit the report to this office. It is usually received within a week or two.

Upon receipt of the report, data entry enters it into our database, where we do two things:

- 1) We generate an invoice for the certificate of operation (\$100.00)
- 2) We generate a violation notification letter (VNL). Those are mailed to the owner by the end of the week after being entered.

We ask the owner to pay the invoice upon receipt and contact the elevator company for violation resolution.

At this point the owner will have to produce either the report or the VNL in order for the elevator contractor to correct the violations. After all violations are corrected, the owner is then required to sign and date the VNL and mail or fax it into this office. Data entry will close out the violations and if the invoice has been paid, the certificate of operation is mailed to the location

LETTER FROM THE CHIEF (CONTINUED)

specified by the billing instructions on the inspection report.

Most violations have a 30 day compliance date. We can extend that if necessary in some cases.

Sometimes the problem is compounded in the fact that the owner waited too long to schedule an inspection. The certificate of operation was already expired by several weeks or months and now the inspection has been performed, but no certificate posted.

The ultimate responsibility lies with the owner to follow up in a timely manner, after the inspection has been performed. It usually takes about 45 to 60 days for invoices and VNL's to clear this office.

If, after 60 days, the owner has not received a certificate of operation, they (the owner) should contact this office to see what we need to complete the process. At times the service technician will call concerning the status of the certificate of operation. We are happy to speak with you, but we want to keep the owner involved in the process of keeping their elevator in compliance, and not see it become something they contract out for others to do.

The writer went on to express concerns about no certificates posted, and how after March 1st, 2008 it affects working on equipment that is out of compliance with the law.

Let me clarify, this is not what we have in mind in that regard.

It is one thing to repair and place back into service, an unsafe elevator that has never been maintained properly by the owner. It is something else to work on one that has been maintained and inspected but has no current certificate posted.

The writer feels that the department should conduct more quality control checks behind the inspectors. We do reserve the right to conduct these checks. Not only behind the inspectors, but all licensees as well. And we do. Manpower constrains limit this activity, as it does with all companies.

We have found that by far the majority of the licensees in this industry are cognizant of their responsibilities and the far reaching ramifications to the riding public otherwise.

Lastly, the writer mentions that some owners are not having their escalators inspected due to budget constraints. I would simply say if an escalator is being operated in Alabama without the required annual inspection and certificate, we want to know who they are. If the owner chooses to have an elevator or any conveyance placed out of service, the right way, we can do that too.

Thanks again for the letter and the opportunity to address so many important areas of concern.



I hope everyone will find this information helpful. Because one person took the time to ask questions, we have all become a little wiser.

Regards,

Ralph P. Pate

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ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

100 North Union Street Ste 620
PO Box 30500
Montgomery, AL 36130-3500

Phone: 334-242-3460

Fax: 334-240-3417

E-mail: shannon.billups@alalabor.alabama.gov

WE'RE ON THE WEB

WWW.ALALABOR.STATE.AL.US



Elevator Safety Division

The purpose is to provide for the safety of life and limb and to promote public safety awareness. The use of unsafe and defective lifting devices imposes a substantial probability of serious and preventable injury to employees and the public exposed to unsafe conditions. The prevention of these injuries and protection of employees and the public from unsafe conditions is deemed to be in the public interest by the Legislature.

Act No. 2003-349 created the Elevator Safety Review Board, consisting of 10 members, one of whom shall be the State Commissioner of the Department of Labor who shall serve as the administrator.

The Governor shall appoint the remaining nine members of the board as follows:

One representative from a major elevator manufacturing company or its authorized representative; one representative from an elevator servicing company; one representative of the architectural design profession; one representative of the general public; one representative of a municipality in this state; one representative of a building owner or manager; one representative who is physically handicapped; one licensed professional engineer; and one representative of labor involved in the installation, maintenance, and repair of elevators.

Current Elevator Safety Review Board Members And How They Represent You.

Mr. Arthur W. Steber, Chairman Represents Elevator Manufacturers

Jim Bennett, Appointed by Statute, State Labor Commissioner

Mr. Jay Weldon Jenkins, Represents Architectural Design

Mr. Ray Meadows, Represents Elevator Service and Repair Companies

Ms. Betty A. Swann, Represents Public

Mr. Jim Wyatt, Represents Municipalities

Mr. Larry V. Gardner, Represents Building Owners/Managers

Mr. Jerry W. Bragwell, Represents Physically Disabled Community

Joe Weatherford, Represents Licensed professional Engineers

Mr. Ricky J. Guthrie, Represents Labor

...more on this board in next edition...